

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 13, 2020

The Honorable Jovita Carranza
Administrator
Small Business Administration
409 3rd St, SW
Washington, DC 20416

Dear Administrator Carranza,

The effects of COVID-19 on America's small businesses have been disastrous. Our nation faces an unprecedented crisis, and the American economy has essentially been "shut off." Restaurants, hotels, bars, retail stores, farmers, manufacturers, barber shops, gyms – practically every segment of the small business sector is suffering immeasurably.

To address the unprecedented challenges facing small firms, Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), a \$2 trillion stimulus bill containing funding for a wide range of programs designed to help respond to the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This package provided numerous supports for programs and services through the Small Business Administration (SBA). Yet as the SBA works to implement programs to support small businesses, we are concerned to learn that there is no longer a full-time Director for the Office of Rural Affairs.

Section 26 of the Small Business Act (15 USC 653) established an Office of Rural Affairs within the Small Business Administration that has explicit functions to help small businesses that are especially needed during this time, including:

- Striving to achieve an equitable distribution of the financial assistance available from the Administration for small business concerns located in rural areas; and
- Providing information to industries, organizations, and State and local governments concerning the assistance available to rural small business concerns through the Administration and through other Federal departments and agencies.

As the virus shuts down schools, factories, restaurants, and other businesses across rural America the SBA must provide the Office of Rural Affairs at SBA with the staff and resources to ensure that rural small businesses are able to survive the tough times ahead. Rural businesses sometimes need specialized assistance and in recent history, stimulus policies have failed to help make our rural communities whole, which is precisely the reason why the Office of Rural Affairs at SBA is so important at this time. This office is meant to ensure that rural small businesses have information and access to the important programs Congress has implemented to support small firms.

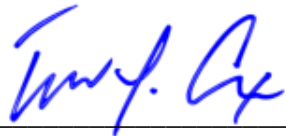
Our rural small businesses across the country are struggling, and the Office of Rural Affairs is needed now more than ever. We strongly urge that the Office of Rural Affairs have the full-time staff and resources necessary to support rural small businesses as they struggle to survive the coronavirus pandemic and resulting economic downturn.

Given that the Director of the Office of Rural Affairs was recently reassigned, **we ask that you provide Congress a written response to this letter within 30 days that includes answers to the following questions:**

- Why was the previous Director of the Office of Rural Affairs removed, reassigned, or detailed to another agency?
- Is there a new Director of the Office of Rural Affairs?
- Are there any full-time staff at the Office of Rural Affairs?
- What is the budget for the Office of Rural Affairs?
- What is SBA doing to ensure that rural small businesses are receiving information and support during the coronavirus pandemic?

We appreciate your consideration on the request. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us or have your staff contact Nandini Narayan, nandini.narayan@mail.house.gov. We look forward to your answers and continued cooperative efforts and request a response by May 31st, 2020.

Sincerely,



TJ COX
Member of Congress



W. GREGORY STEUBE
Member of Congress



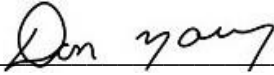
ABBY FINKENAUER
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Member of Congress



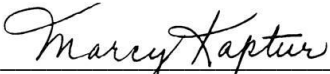
CINDY AXNE
Member of Congress



DON YOUNG
Member of Congress



SHEILA JACKSON LEE
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MARCY KAPTUR
Member of Congress



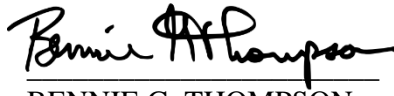
ROBIN L. KELLY
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TERRI SEWELL
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BENNIE G. THOMPSON
Member of Congress



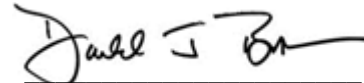
JUAN VARGAS
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DAVID SCOTT
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MIKE THOMPSON
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DONALD J. BACON
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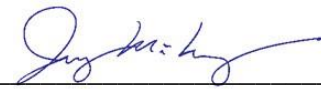
JARED HUFFMAN
Member of Congress



HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON
Member of Congress



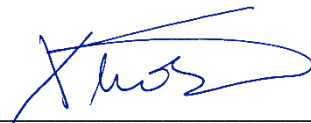
ANN MCLANE KUSTER
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JERRY MCNERNEY
Member of Congress



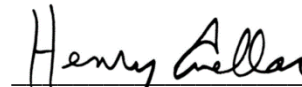
TOM O'HALLERAN
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